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AUTHOR Voss, Bernd
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ABSTRACT

Classroom language has not yet been recognized as an important aspect of foreign language learning and teaching, but it can make a meaningful contribution to language instruction. Providing for teacher training in this field not only implies provision of information and practice, but also involves changing teacher attitudes about the appropriateness of certain areas of reference for foreign language classroom discourse. Teaching styles and methods would probably also be affected by incorporation of classroom language study. Although there are large areas of overlap between general and classroom-related aspects of teachers' language, classroom language provides a less arbitrary and possibly more helpful framework for examining language learning activities in teacher education. Research can build on some recent advances in the conceptualization of classroom language and its importance in learning and teaching. (MSE)

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'CLASSROOM LANGUAGE' - A NEGLECTED AREA IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND TESTING

BERND VOSS
(UNIVERSITY OF BIELEFELD)

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'CLASSROOM LANGUAGE' - A NEGLECTED AREA IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND TESTING

Bernd Voss (University of Bielefeld)

1 Introduction

This paper is an attempt to give an account of some aspects of the background to a larger project concerned with the development of teaching materials in the field of 'classroom language' for German teachers of English (1).

By 'classroom language' we mean the kind of language used by teachers and pupils to conduct classroom business, e.g. to set up groups for group work, to distribute material, to organise activities, to tell a pupil off, to focus attention onto a particular teaching point, to ask for further clarification or for a repetition, to bid for the floor, to express joy or regret over something that has just happened in the classroom etc.. All of these are real communicative acts between teacher and pupil, pupil and teacher, or amongst the pupils themselves, within the classroom setting. Conducting this kind of interaction (as far as possible) in the target language opens up a directly relevant practice field in using the foreign language for real communicative purposes. However, language teachers do not always make (appropriate?, full?, any?) use of this only genuine situation that institutionalised language teaching provides.

A major reason for this neglect appears to be that language teachers themselves tend to have difficulties with this domain of language, and we shall argue in this paper that there are mainly three closely interrelated factors responsible for this - (i) deficiencies in the set-up of the language education of intending language teachers (certainly in Germany); (ii) lack of suitable teaching materials for this language domain; and (iii) uncertainty as to what 'classroom language' actually entails.

In what follows we shall take up each of these three problems in turn inan attempt to clarify the field before providing a brief sketch of the nature of the proposed teaching and testing materials and some general conclusions.

2 Language Needs and Language Education of Language Teachers

An attempt to specify the language needs of language teachers can perhaps best start off from the observation that teaching a foreign language is rather different from teaching any other school subject in that the foreign language is not only the goal but also the medium of instruction. In subjects such as biology, mathematics, or sports, where the objectives may be knowledge of biological facts, understanding of mathematical processes or the development

of ergonomic movements, the medium of instruction is the mother tongue. This is typically different in the modern language classroom where the foreign language is to replace the mother tongue as the medium of instruction as soon as practicable, and that could mean right from the start.

While this may not be universally accepted as a description of the facts at present, there is little doubt about its desirability in principle. Few people would disagree with the view that the aim of teaching a modern language has not been reached when learners are able to talk about the language and its cultural background in their mother tongues, but that it is necessary for them to develop the ability to interact meaningfully in it. Where is the learner to learn this if not in the foreign language classroom? But how is this conceivable unless the interaction in the classroom is done as far as possible in the foreign language itself?

There is no doubt that conducting lessons entirely in the target language makes particularly high demands on the teacher's active command of the foreign language, and it may be instructive to look more closely into the language needs of language teachers in general, before considering the question of how and whether these needs are being met within the context of teacher education.

The language needs of the language teacher can be conveniently thought of as having a general aspect, a study-related aspect and a classroom-related aspect.

Since it is not central to our argumentation, it may suffice here to characterise the general aspect of the language command hopefully possessed by a language teacher in such general terms as the ability to cope with everyday communicative needs in the country of the target language, or to explain aspects of one's own country to a foreigner. The need for this aspect of language command is obvious in that this is what teachers are usually supposed to teach their language learners in the foreign language classroom.

The study-related aspect of a teacher's language command refers to specialised language domains such as the language of literary analysis, of linguistic description, of methodological discussion, of the presentation of cultural and sociological fields. Language teachers need this aspect of their language command in order to be able to inform themselves about their own fields of study in the target language, but also to be able to introduce the more advanced ones of their own learners to the basics of the disciplines concerned. This need is perhaps most obvious for teachers teaching advanced learners about to enter university, i.e. at a level where highly demanding topics call for appropriate linguistic skills on the part of the teacher.

The classroom-related aspect of a language teacher's language command is the component which we are particularly concerned with here. It refers to the kind of language needed to conduct lessons in the target language, i.e. to cope with the classroom situation

in the foreign language. Why teachers need this aspect of their language command has already been suggested above: there are many good reasons why foreign language lessons should be conducted as far as possible in the target language. What this entails will be set out in more detail below (part 4), so that we can now turn to the question of how these various language needs are met within the context of teacher education.

Teacher education in Germany usually starts with a three or four year course at a university or college (1st stage). This is then followed by a probationary period of between 18 months and two years, in which the trainee teacher receives practical training in the teaching of his or her subjects (2nd stage). The examination taken at the end of this stage establishes a person as a fully qualified teacher. At a later stage, there is in-service training available for those who are lucky enough to be near where such courses might be offered and sufficiently interested in attending (3rd stage).

Looking at these three stages of teacher education in reverse order makes plain how much the language education of future language teachers is a chance product rather than the result of careful planning.

In-service courses - as far as they exist at all - usually exclude training in the target language, presumably because the addressees are qualified teachers who by definition must possess an acceptable level of competence in the foreign language, which obviates the need for further activities in the field. In other words, it would come near to breaking a taboo to offer language courses of any kind at this level because such a step would recognise officially that deficiencies exist.

A similar reluctance to accept explicit language training as part of the instructional programme can be observed during the second stage of teacher-training. By passing their university examination, trainee teachers have demonstrated their possession of at least passable levels of language competence in the foreign language, which could not possibly be called into question by offering more language instruction at this stage. To be fair, there are also many other important demands competing for time at this stage, but in spite of not infrequent complaints about the limited language command of some future language teachers (cf.e.g. Ostberg 1982), not much is explicitly being done about it.

Even at the first stage of teacher training it should not be forgotten that it is only comparatively recently that the language teaching aspect has been taken somewhat more seriously. Especially where languages such as English or French are concerned with their long standing and strong presence in German schools (often between seven and nine years of instruction before entering university), tradition is still strong in encouraging the belief that language teaching is not really a proper task for a university - apart perhaps from translation - , since students can theoretically be expec-

ted to have a reasonable command of the language when they arrive, guaranteed by the final school-leaving examination, which effectively defines the end of language learning needs. Where does the buck stop?

Turning now, against this outline of the language education of future language teachers, to the question of how their language needs are met within the context of their training, we are confronted with the following picture.

The general component - perhaps precisely because of its inherent vagueness - is the least problematic one in this context in that it has come to be an accepted part of the training at the first stage. While not all teachers eventually turn out to be proficient in this field, there seems to be general agreement nowadays that improvement is necessary, and steps are being taken to remedy the situation by encouraging periods of residence abroad and by providing appropriate language courses.

There is less readiness to cater for the study-related language needs of future language teachers. The possible step of teaching all or at least most subjects usually making up a teacher's study course in the target language is hardly ever taken in German universities and colleges. Still, students do become at least somewhat acquainted with this aspect of the language command expected of future teachers, in the context of their studies.

It is the classroom-related aspect of their language command that future language teachers get least preparation for. As pointed out above, at the second and third stages of teacher education, overt language training is practically nonexistent. At best, trainee teachers are referred to one of the numerous little booklets with more or less adequate collections of classroom phrases (cf. part three below for more details), which do little to improve the situation. A significant effect can only be expected from explicit teaching at the first stage, where overt language teaching is considered acceptable. However, in spite of the considerable progress that sociolinguistic research into aspects of language use in the classroom has made in recent years (cf. Sinclair and Coulthard 1975, Edwards and Furlong 1978, Mehan 1979, Sinclair and Brazil 1982, Lörscher 1983), the growing awareness of the role of language in classroom teaching seems to have had little influence to date on the language training of future teachers of foreign languages. It is extremely rare to find institutions which expressly include classroom-specific language needs in their language teaching programmes, nor are there usually any steps taken to specifically screen-test future teachers as to their proficiency, or lack of it, in this highly relevant field of language use.

It seems that classroom language has not yet emerged in the professional consciousness as an important aspect of the language command of (future) language teachers. Two fallacies contribute to the frequent failure to perceive the problem. One is implicit in

the notion that a good general command of the language will carry the language teacher through most of the exigencies of his professional life. While nobody would quarrel with demanding a high general level of attainment, unfortunately not all language teachers can be said to have reached this stage in the language they are teaching. In addition, however, the teaching situation is characterised by interactional patterns rarely found outside the classroom, so that the non-native teacher will have little experience with classroom talk no matter how good his general command of the language might be. The second fallacy is implicit in the curious notion that certain aspects of the verbal interaction in the classroom are not legitimately part of the lesson 'proper' and should therefore be conducted in the mother tongue of the learners rather than in the foreign language. We shall comment on this more fully below (part 4).

We have tried to show so far that classroom language has not yet found its proper place in the context of teacher education. The result of this neglect is that important aspects of the verbal interaction in the foreign language classroom are not at all, not sufficiently or not adequately covered in the target language, with unfortunate effects on the language learning opportunities of the pupils or students involved.

Observations of lessons taught by university students on teaching practice and even by fully qualified (non-native) teachers show that deficits in the classroom-related component of the teacher's language command tend to make themselves felt in one or the other of the following ways.

The teacher may use the mother tongue for a large proportion of the interaction in the classroom, thereby depriving his learners of considerable opportunities to use the foreign language meaningfully. This is primarily a quantitative problem, but we may also expect this to induce in the learner the - perhaps unconscious - notion that when it comes to real communicative needs the target language is unsuitable, so that it would also be a qualitative one.

On the other hand, the teacher may take over the kind of language he himself experienced as a learner, with all its mistakes and deficiencies, and thus establish and perpetuate a classroom dialect at worst comprehensible only within that particular classroom, without ascertaining its value in the real world.

Or the teacher may use a tightly controlled repertoire of stereotyped formulae which in their rigidity (blunt imperatives prevail) are not only inappropriate but also dangerous as a model for the learner inasmuch as the latter may be tempted - or forced through lack of experience with alternatives - to use similar expressions himself (e.g. 'Speak louder!'), for instance in a conversation with his peers or even superiors, without being aware of the social implications of the phrase used.

3 Classroom Phrase-Books

If the first of the factors contributing to the feelings of unfamiliarity and unease towards the domain of classroom language is connected with deficiencies in the set-up of the language education of future language teachers in Germany, there is no doubt that lack of suitable learning and teaching materials for this area is the second.

As we have noted above, it is not unusual, during the second stage of teacher education, for the teacher trainer or perhaps an older colleague to draw the trainee teacher's attention to one or another of the numerous booklets containing lists of classroom phrases arranged under various headings and intended for the use of the practising teacher (2). Such a move is often triggered off by some language mishap that might have occurred in the trainee's lesson, and it is equally often carried out in a somewhat embarrassed and apologetic atmosphere: the commendable attempt to spare a young colleague's feelings appears mingled with the shameful recognition of the inadequacy of the help offered. The booklets are not really considered 'respectable', and are passed on as covert rather than overt information.

The idea of the phrase-books is that they are to be used for reference purposes if, during the preparation of the foreign language lesson (or also after the event), the teacher realises that there is something which he intended to do and which he cannot (or could not) confidently do in the foreign language. In other words, their usefulness depends entirely on the realisation that something might go, or has gone, wrong. Considering the characteristic ways in which problems with the domain of classroom language manifest themselves (cf. part 2 above) it comes as no surprise to find that the phrase-book approach does not seem to make much impact. Although the dictionary format (e.g. Kissling 2/1981) is the exception rather than the rule, it is the logical consequence of the reference purpose the books are primarily meant to serve. However, dictionaries by themselves are not very suitable learning and teaching materials in this field, nor in any other.

The other and perhaps more serious reason for the understandable misgivings aroused by the phrase-books is connected with their contents. While a more detailed analysis than is possible here would reveal the various merits and demerits of the individual phrase-books concerned, in general they appear narrow in scope, often unreliable in their information, and unsystematic in their view of the nature of what is presented as classroom language. The result is that many questions a user might have, are in fact left unanswered.

4 Classroom Interaction and Classroom Language

The third factor contributing to the problem of classroom language in foreign language teaching - and the difficulties teachers

themselves may have with this language domain - is connected with a more general uncertainty as to what the notion of 'classroom language' entails.

Language has an extremely important role to play in any educational setting, and perhaps even more so in foreign language lessons. Looking at these lessons in their entirety and at the kinds of verbal interaction going on within them immediately draws attention to the fact that the language of the classroom is by no means all teacher talk, but includes pupil-teacher talk and, of course, also pupil-pupil talk. In addition, it is important to realise that a considerable proportion of the interaction in the classroom is not directly concerned with the topic of the lesson at all, but with preparatory moves, organisatory aspects, social behaviour, or similar fields of reference. In other words, classroom language covers a much wider field than just one aspect of a teacher's language command.

Existing implicit (as e.g. in classroom phrase-books) and explicit (cf. theoretical literature) categorisations of the field can be systematised into five different - and no doubt complementary - approaches which, taken together, provide a comprehensive mapping of the classroom language domain and can be captured in the following five questions,

1 At what stage in the lesson does the interaction take place?

2 What is the interaction about?

3 What is the function of the interaction in the context of the lesson?

4 What is the communicative purpose of the interaction?

5 By which linguistic means is the interaction implemented?

We shall now discuss each of these five questions in turn in an attempt to provide a comprehensive outline of the field, as well as an indication of where the problematic areas of the concept of classroom language lie.

4.1. At what stage?

The first question draws attention to the sequential structure of a lesson, the stages of which are often separated from each other by explicit boundary signals, such as "Now let's close our books and turn to the board" or similar indicators. Most classroom phrase-books follow this approach in the presentation of the greater part of their material. Stages suggested by this approach include the following:

1 opening (making the pupils come in, greetings; attendance, lateness; opening of the actual proceedings)

2 transition (from one stage to the next)

3 homework (setting, checking)

4 working with course books (texts, exercises)

5 working with/at the board

6 working with technical aids (OHP, tape recorder, cassette recorder, language laboratory, video; maps, charts, flashcards etc.)

7 working with worksheets (producing them, distributing them in class, using them during the lesson)

8 songs and games

9 group work and role play

1o discussing topics, organisation, behaviour

11 discussing extra-curricular activities (excursions, day trips)

12 topic-related work (usually based on texts)

13 language-related work (pronunciation, orthography, syntax, lexis, pragmatics; comprehension; conversation skills etc.)

14 tests and examinations (announcing, setting up, correcting, discussing)

15 announcements (speech day, assembly; changes in time-table, absent teachers, temporary replacements)

16 special events (festivities, holidays, prizes, birthdays etc.)

17 closing (end of work, clearing up, valediction, dismissal)

While it is no doubt possible to define these stages differently, an attempt has been made in the above list to be as comprehensive as possible and to present exhaustively all characteristic stages of a lesson. What is perhaps more interesting than the question of whether they do indeed cover all conceivable cases is the fact that they mirror different levels at which decisions about the next stage in a lesson tend to be taken. While some are definitely bound to a particular place in a lesson (1, 17), others are free as to when they occur and are characterised by the medium used (4 to 7), or the type of activity envisaged (8 to 11), or the main purpose pursued (12, 13), or the function fulfilled (2, 3, 14, 15, 16). These differences of level may be theoretically unsatisfactory, but are a natural result of the fact that different kinds of features can serve as the dominating aspect of a particular stage of a lesson.

4.2 What about?

The second approach to classroom language starts off from an analysis of what the interaction in the classroom refers to, i.e. what it is that teachers and pupils in the classroom in fact talk about. It shows that it is necessary to distinguish between several areas of reference, within the context of the verbal interaction in a lesson.

Priesemann (1971) distinguishes between subject-related and communication-related talk in the classroom setting, emphasising that a considerable proportion of the verbal interaction is needed to establish common ground and to prepare for the understanding of the topic, and that without these moves the learner has no access to the subject-related part of the interaction. More specifically concerned with foreign language teaching is Black and Butzkamm's (1977) distinction between language-related and content-related aspects of classroom communication. Language-related communication is characterised as monodimensional: the main concern here is whether language has been used formally correctly. Content-related communication, on the other hand, is more concerned with the content of an utterance as an expression of a communicative aim. The examples and further explanations narrow this down to refer specifically to the real-life situation of the learner, even to the exclusion of e.g. the lesson topic. Fanselow (1977) is more precise in this respect in distinguishing between language/life/procedure/subject matter as areas of reference of classroom talk. Language refers to a wider field than Black and Butzkamm's language-related communication, because Fanselow sees metacommunication as part of this category, whereas in Black and Butzkamm's analysis this is expressly excluded. Procedure highlights those areas of classroom talk that are concerned with procedural questions. The separation of life and subject matter into two categories makes it possible to keep the real-life situation of the learner apart from the content of the lesson, as two different fields of reference of classroom discourse. Chaudron's (1977) analysis of the correction behaviour of foreign language teachers shows that the corrections refer either to language points (linguistic), or to the actual classroom situation (classroom interaction and discourse) or to the lesson content (subject matter). His second category then covers what Fanselow keeps separate as life and procedure. From a somewhat different point of view, Boueke, Henrici and Schülein (1983) describe classroom interaction as either content-referenced, process-referenced or group-referenced. Content-referenced interaction focusses on the lesson topic, process-referenced interaction aims at establishing acceptable procedures according to which the topic is to be handled in class, and the group-referenced parts of the interaction refer to the development of behavioural norms within the group of learners. The aspect of behaviour as something that is potentially being talked about in the classroom is also singled out specially in Sinclair and Brazil's (1982) analysis, where distinctions are made between the topic (content), the organisation of working procedures (organisation), the behaviour of the learners (discipline), and - although perhaps not very distinctly put - classroom dis-

course (discourse) itself, as areas which teachers and pupils talk about in the classroom setting.

An attempt to systematise the results of the above studies leads to the following six areas of reference of classroom discourse:

1 topic. This term covers the lesson contents, or topic, as it is for instance suggested by the text or textbook used, i.e. the (non-actual, imaginary) situations, problems, facts presented for classroom treatment. Examples:

Who was Mary Stuart? When does Peter get up every morning? What is the main point of the first part of the text?

2 reality. This term covers references to the real-life situation in which the learners find themselves (except areas five and six below). We would argue that this area is of primary immediacy to them, as opposed to the secondary degree of immediacy represented by the first field above. Examples:

It's nice to see you back, Peter (after an absence). How old are you, Mary? Could I borrow your rubber? May I go to the toilet? Please, sir, Henry's cut his finger.

3 language. The third area covers explicit references to formal aspects of the language being taught, either as the focus of the teaching at that stage, or in the context of a correction. Examples:

Remember, committee is spelt with two e's at the end. What is the past tense form of teach again, Barbara? What is the meaning of dowdy?

4 discourse. This term is meant to capture those parts of the verbal interaction in the classroom explicitly concerned with the establishment and maintenance of communication. Examples:

I couldn't hear you - could you say that again, please? Is that what you mean? I'm not sure whether I've made myself understood, but what I mean is... Could you explain your last point again?

5 organisation. This area covers utterances directly concerned with organisatory moves. Examples:

Could you do the next sentence? I've finished - what am I supposed to do now? May I work with Colin on this? Could you share your book with Linda today - we're one copy short. I haven't had my turn yet. Could you split up into groups of four now - we want each group to work on a particular aspect of the story.

6 discipline. This final area refers to the parts of classroom talk concerned with the maintenance of order. This is usually initiated by the teacher, but can also be sparked off by an appeal from a pupil. Examples:

Could you pay attention for once. No prompting please: give him a chance to do it himself. Please, sir, Bob keeps pulling my hair.

A recent informal survey among students studying to become teachers of English (N = 2o) revealed that they thought the following classroom activities to be the three most important ones for language teachers to be able to do in the foreign language: (1) explain the meaning of new words, (2) explain a grammatical construction, (3) correct oral contributions. Lowest ratings were given to: explanations about classroom procedures; setting up of technical aid; checking attendance and doing other administrative duties.While areas 3 and, of course, 1 tend to be accepted as fields of reference to be covered in the foreign language, in foreign language teaching, many of the other areas are often not considered to be part of the lesson 'proper' and are therefore dealt with in the mother tongue.

However, it can hardly be emphasised enough that including these other areas as widely as possible in the foreign language part of classroom discourse is a decisive aspect of the credibility of teaching a foreign language at all: the more these fields are excluded from communication in the foreign language, the more the learner is inevitably left with the impression that real communicative purposes can only be served in the mother tongue, and that the foreign language is only suitable for the verbalisation of the necessarily fictitious worlds of textbooks and other teaching materials.

4.3 What for in the lesson context?

The third approach to classroom language takes its starting point from the question of what a particular part of the interaction means in the context of a lesson. In a rather detailed analysis, Sinclair and Brazil (1982) distinguish between four basic functions, initiation as the starting point of an interactional sequence, response as the reaction to an initiation, follow-up as the reaction to a response, and frame and focus, signalling a transition from one stage to another. A sequence of the first three functions is called teaching exchange, the last two are grouped together as boundary exchange. Bidding, i.e. asking for permission to speak, can be considered a special aspect of the response function; complex initiations include nominations, cues, prompts, clues, and of course reformulations as re-initiations.

It seems, then, that it is useful to distinguish between (1) initiation, (2) response, (3) follow-up and (4) boundary as the four basic functions of classroom discourse within the context of a lesson. Classroom conventions suggest that all except the second

are dominated by the teacher. This is not unproblematic, in particular in foreign language teaching, because although it enhances the (desirable) role of the teacher as a language model, a strong dominance and the resulting social markedness of the language used may imply unsuitability of the teacher's language for the purposes of the learner. As far as possible, care must therefore be taken (i) to involve the learners also in functions other than the second, (ii) to use language which is 'reversible', i.e. which can be used reciprocally, as between equals, rather than language which is clearly marked for hierarchial (social) implications (as e.g. commands, in contrast to requests, etc.).

4.4 What for in the context of communication?

Asking for the purpose of a part of the interaction in the classroom is not only a way of aiming at sequential structural elements of a lesson (as above), but can also serve to elicit general communicative functions. Thus, Bellack et al. (1966) distinguish between four moves within classroom communication, structuring, soliciting, responding and reacting. A comparison with the approaches described above shows, however, that structuring captures the reference to a particular field of discourse, viz.organisation (see 4.2 above), whereas the other three correspond to a teaching exchange as described in the previous section. More recent is Sinclair and Brazil's (1982) distinction between four communicative functions of teacher talk, telling, controlling, stimulating and rewarding. The second and third of these correspond to Bellack's soliciting move and imply a physical response in the first case and a verbal one in the second. Rewarding apparently covers what is termed reacting by Bellack. Telling is specifically concerned with the communicative function of informing. All others are focussed on structural lesson elements, which is perhaps not quite so obvious since Sinclair and Brazil's description - with its emphasis on the language of the teacher - does not include the reaction of the learners in the analysis.

Looking at the possible communicative functions of language within a lesson in perspective, we propose the following categorisation in an attempt to do justice to the typical range of aspects involved:

1 inform. This function is not only fulfilled by the teacher passing on a piece of information (e.g. 'Washington is the capital of the United States'), but also by the pupil who answers a (factual) question.

2 evaluate. It will usually be the teacher who deals out praise or blame. However, this function would also be performed more neutrally by pupils and teacher alike when e.g. expressing personal feelings, making personal comments ('what a dirty trick that was') or making explicit value judgments ('I don't like this story very much because ...').

3 instruct. What we mean by this term is the function of someone (usually the teacher) telling someone else to do something, as opposed to

4 elicit, by which we mean the function of asking someone to say something, i.e. to give a verbal response, as is customary with most teacher questions.

5 maintain social climate. With this category we try to capture those parts of the verbal interaction in the classroom that are not obviously concerned with any of the above and primarily serve social functions, such as greetings, valedictions, encouragement ('You're nearly there - just carry on'), social rituals in connection with e.g. a birthday ('Many happy returns'), an excuse ('That's all right'), a sneeze ('Bless you'), a piece of bad news ('I'm sorry to hear that').

6 maintain communication. This category is intended to cover utterances that influence and steer the communication processes in the classroom, such as digression signals ('incidentally ...'), appeals for agreement ('we are all agreed, aren't we, that ...'), handicap signals ('I haven't perhaps understood it all, but has this to do with ...'), appeals for (linguistic) help ('I forgot the English for it again, but what I mean is ...'), or similar.

Obviously, these six communicative functions are by no means classroom-specific as such, although their relative frequency here will differ from that found e.g. in private communication. However, we wish to emphasise that also categories 5 and 6 have their legitimate place in the classroom context: if the aim of foreign language teaching is the eventual ability of learners to interact naturally in the target language, it is difficult to see how this could be achieved if these two functions were to be systematically excluded from foreign language classroom discourse.

4.5 How?

The last question approaches the verbal interaction in the foreign language classroom from the point of view of the linguistic forms needed to carry the various functions described above. It is well known that there is no one-to-one relationship between form and function, and the following forms can serve a variety of - sometimes rather classroom-specific - functions:

1 declaratives, e.g. The blackboard hasn't been cleaned. You are too noisy. I'd pick that up if I were you.

2 interrogatives, e.g. Could you do the next sentence? Why don't you keep quiet.

3 imperatives, e.g. Try again, Peter. Don't give up.

4 interjections, e.g. My goodness, what a noise. Right. Crumbs.

Table 1

Aspects of verbal interaction in the (foreign language) classroom

1. At what stage in the lesson?	2. What about?	3. What for? (lesson)	4. What for? (communication)	5. How?
1 opening	1 topic	1 initiation	1 inform	1 declaratives
2 transition	2 reality	2 response	2 evaluate	2 interrogatives
3 homework	3 language	3 follow-up	3 instruct	3 imperatives
4 course book (work with/ at)	4 discourse	4 boundary	4 elicit	4 interjections
5 blackboard (work with/ at)	5 organisation		5 maintain social climate	5 set phrases
6 technical aid (work with/ at)	6 discipline		6 maintain communidation	6 signals
7 worksheet (work with/ at)				
8 songs, games				
9 group work, role play				
10 discussing: topic organisation, behaviour				
11 discussing: extra-curricular activities				
12 topic - related work				
13 language - related work				
14 exams, tests				
15 announcements				
16 special events				
17 closing				

5 set phrases, e.g. Happy birthday to you. You're welcome.

6 signals, e.g. hesitations, intentional changes in pitch ('quotation'), but also linguistic signals (below the sentence level) such as: however, on the whole, as it were.

5 Teaching and Testing Materials

On the background of the preceding survey it is now possible to sketch out in broad terms the basic requirements suitable teaching and testing materials need to fulfil.

First, as our survey has shown, classroom language is a wider concept than is often realised, and this needs to be reflected in the materials offered for this language domain.

Second, the materials need to be performance-oriented in that they need to teach not only the knowledge of the language used in the classroom, but also the ability to use it.

This aim would assign a very important place to criterion-referenced tests as a check on the knowledge aspect, and a prerequisite for the performance-oriented aspect, of a language course in this field.

Finally, it would seem important to develop a comprehensive screen-test for this language domain in order to make sure that (future, or even present) language teachers who are themselves uncertain of their language command in this field, can be given specific help.

6 Conclusions

We have argued in this paper that classroom language still has to come into its own as an important aspect of foreign language learning and teaching. We hope to have been able to show that it can make an important contribution to meaningful foreign language instruction.

Providing for overt training in this field implies not only the provision of adequate information and practice, but also, in many cases, an attempt to change attitudes, e.g. as far as the appropriateness of certain areas of reference for foreign language classroom discourse is concerned. Teaching styles and methods would no doubt be rather directly affected, too.

Although there are obviously vast areas of overlap between what we have called the general and the classroom-related aspects of a language teacher's language command, we believe that classroom language provides a less arbitrary, and therefore possibly more helpful, framework for language learning activities within a teacher's training course, than whatever general language compe-

tence is taken to mean: any time redirected from general language courses to a specific one on classroom language would not jeopardise the general standard, but would help to raise it by providing language work within an obviously relevant context.

Recent course materials (Hughes 1981, Willis 1981) show that important progress has been made in the conceptualisation of what classroom language implies and in the presentation of it for learning and teaching purposes. It is to be hoped that the project, the background of which has been presented in this paper, will be a further step in this direction.

7 Notes

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2 e.g. Müller and Zellmer (1952), Windmann (1959), Meldau and Pearcy (1961), Weidner (1968), Heuer and Parry (1971), Ebbinghausen (1977), Kißling (2/1981), Gressmann and Rich (1982).

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